

MISS ANNA WARNER POST
118 EAST 3RD STREET
OSWEGO, N. Y.

Dec 10th

Secretary to the Alumnae
Union College:

Dear Sue:

My grandfather Orrin J.
Harmon class of 1838 has
left us here except myself.
and I wish to dispose of
articles before I pass on -
I have two diplomas, the
Phi Beta Kappa key and
the Sigma Phi pin - with

uscda9835 harmon - o - 0001

any of them be of interest to
alumni library.

Kindly address ex
change and other

Anna M. Post.

December 23, 1952

Miss Anna Warner Post
118 East 3rd Street
Oswego, New York

My dear Miss Post:

Thank you very much for your letter of December 10th. Union College would certainly appreciate having the diplomas, Phi Beta Kappa key and Sigma Phi pin that belonged to your father. These would become a part of the permanent historical files of the college.

Since its inception in 1911, the Alumni Office has spent a great deal of time building up records for the men who attended Union College in the 1800's. As you know this involves a great deal of work and in some cases very little material is turned up. This seems to be true of your father's record and we would be pleased to have you add anything you may care to to the data enclosed which is all that we have on him in a biographical way.

It is letters such as yours that assist us greatly in our work and we thank you for your thought.

Sincerely yours,

Henry J. Swanker
Secretary, Graduate Council

*article for names
of parents, wife, children
etc.*

~~1834~~ 1835

O. J. Harmon is engaged in the insurance business. For many years he was City Judge of Oswego.

C. March 1883.

ORVILLE J. HARMON, 1834 Oswego, N. Y.

Entered from Belleville, N. Y. A. B. 1835; Φ B K.

Counsellor at Law. Taught 1835-37 at Ballston Spa; admitted to the Bar 1837, and practiced at Oswego to date; latterly also an Insurance and Real Estate Agent.

Recorder of Oswego 1848-66; Judge Oswego Co. Court. Since 1860 Member and for many years President of the State (N. Y.) Association of Sunday Schools.

Σ φ.
Cub.
1891

Harmon, Orville J. 5/15/1835.

"...bump of mirthfulness considerably developed...religious beliefs...I have been informed that he is skeptical... 'feels his oats' pretty well.
Pearson Diaries V.2, p.113.

ORVILLE J. HARMON, '35,

was born at Redfield, Oswego Co., N. Y., October 5th, 1811. He was an Adelpic and a Sigma Phi. He studied law in Ballston, N. Y., and some years after settled in Oswego N. Y.; becoming one of the most prominent practitioners of the region, especially in criminal court. He became member of Phi Beta Kappa. He was the first Recorder elected by the city, serving four years till 1852, and again held the office 1858-65. His unsparing execution of the liquor laws made Oswego noted for its orderliness. His probity was recognized by all parties. He worked zealously in promotion of Sunday Schools, was

President of the Oswego Orphan Asylum, a member of the Prisons Association of the State and active in all these positions. He was a Republican and a liberal Episcopalian. He died of hemorrhage at Oswego, August 28th, 1893; leaving a widow and two daughters.

1835 HARMON, ORVILLE J.

A graduate of Union College, recorder of the city (Oswego) in 1848-52 and 1858-64; prominent in Sabbath School and Bible work in the State, and latterly an insurance agent. p. 269

Member of the first board of trustees of the Oswego City Savings Bank, which was incorporated March 4, 1859. p. 391

Member of first board of directors of the Oswego Gas Light Company, incorporated March 23, 1852. p. 403

The Church of the Evangelist (Protestant Episcopal) organized in July 28, 1850. Its Sunday School was organized in 1850 with 18 scholars under the supervision of O. J. Harmon. p. 428

He was trustee of the Y.M.C.A. 1894-95. p. 435

Supervisor of the town of Scriba, 1846. p. 435

Landmarks of Oswego County, N.Y.
John C. Churchill, Ed.
D. Mason & Co.
Syracuse 1895

8/22/93

O. J. HARMON.

When men of such long, unremitting and wide-extended usefulness as Orville J. Harmon die, the community pauses to think. The community that did not would hardly be worthy of the presence in its midst of the one, now dead, whose life has been so pure and his labor so wisely and benevolently directed over so broad a field and through such a variety of channels. The city of Oswego, like other similar communities, has a great many good men within her borders devoted to morality and right,—men who stand as fronted barriers against the pernicious tendencies of the times and the special wrong-doing of individuals. Oswego has many such noble men, we repeat; but it may well be doubted, if, after rendering to each a due award for his virtuous endeavors, there is another among them all, who, in length of years, in unbroken fidelity to the cause of right, and in active and effective zeal in laboring for the right, can offer a record the equal of his whose life closed yesterday,—closed on the day which he so much delighted to honor,—the day the decent and pious observance of which involved, as he felt and as so many others feel, the nation's welfare as well as the future of the individual. It is as well, perhaps, that he should have breathed out his last on the day he so much loved and venerated and which he did so much to make respected,—the day associated with which are so many kindly, as well as sacred, acts and impulses of the christianized human family.

Mr. Harmon's death on the Sabbath day, under the peculiar circumstances which accompanied it, may serve to fix public attention upon and to convey a lesson more effective and lasting than could be taught in almost any other way. He went, it seems, to land within the city limits over which he had unquestioned legal control to break up a game of ball—an illegal act on the Sabbath. His requests for the players and spectators, some two hundred, to leave the grounds were disgracefully disregarded. He was defied, and the game went on. Old, being in his eighty-third year, and enfeebled, the excitement brought on a hemorrhage from which he expired before he was able to reach his home, towards which he drove after the failure of his mission.

Not till the police were known to be approaching did the players vacate the premises of which they were in unlawful possession and engaged therein in an unlawful act, call it a pastime or what you will. The incident serves to teach how naturally one unlawful act educates and leads up to others more serious than the first. It is a lesson that ought to make a deep impression, both upon the public authorities and upon individuals.

There was no face better known in the city than Judge Harmon's, no was there a more kindly one. Wherever he touched life, and the field was varied, he touched it unerringly and with a strong and wholesome personality. For years he was the recorder of the city and during all that time he was a terror to evil doers. The streets of the city were safe thoroughfares at night, for women as well as men. The certainty that justice would be dealt out to wrong-doing, promptly, adequately and without circumlocution or evasion produced an effect upon the lawlessly inclined more potent than the police. They—the lawless—felt that a vigilant eye was upon their movements and that justice would be swift in overtaking their misdeeds. There is no estimating the power for good exercised by Mr. Harmon as recorder. With him the office was educational as well as punitive. The offenders and the on-lookers were made to understand the nature of the offences charged—the meaning of his cautions, his reprimands and his sentences.

Although a thoroughly public spirited citizen, one whose services were sought after on innumerable occasions and never refused, and doing great good in that way, yet doubtless he will longest and best be remembered for his labors in the Sabbath school among the young. In this field he passed his life, and his services in it are annals not only in this city but his eminence in it understood and appreciated wherever Sabbath school work is done. In this field his own life has been brought into helpful contact with thousands upon thousands of the young and the pure influence thus generated will remain an enduring force long, possibly, after his own name shall have been forgotten.

Of his family relations and of his relations as a neighbor we need not speak. We may say, in a word, that the lives are few indeed, lives as long and as diversified as was his, upon which deserved censure or criticism can find a lesser hold. His life was nobler than any eulogy that may be pronounced upon it.

OBITUARY.

Orville J. Harmon.

Our citizens received a shock yesterday by the intelligence that Orville J. Harmon, one of the most prominent and respected residents of the city, had died from the effects of a hemorrhage. The presence of Mr. Harmon on the street Saturday and yesterday also, apparently in the full enjoyment of the vitality for which he was remarkable rendered the news of his death all the more startling.

The circumstances connected with the sad occurrence are, as near as can be ascertained, as follows: For a number of years Mr. Harmon had been agent for the Murray estate in the southern part of the city, known as "Green Vale Farm." Recently a large number of boys have been in the habit of congregating on a part of the farm on Sunday for the purpose of playing ball. This came to the knowledge of Mr. Harmon and he determined to put a stop to it. He went to police headquarters yesterday and made the request that officers should prohibit such a violation of the Sabbath. He was informed that officers would see to the matter.

It appears that Mr. Harmon drove out to Green Vale Farm between half-past two and three o'clock. He found about two hundred boys and young men collected there and a game of ball was in progress. He ordered them to quit such a profanation of the Sabbath and to leave the grounds. Mr. Harmon appeared to be considerably excited. He was suddenly attacked with illness and leaned against the gate. In an instant blood was seen issuing from his mouth. Putting his gloved hand to his mouth, Mr. Harmon rallied sufficiently to re-enter his buggy and started for home. On Fifth street, near Kingsford park, the patrol wagon on its way to the farm with officers, passed him. Officer Grant observed blood on Mr. Harmon's face and shirt bosom, and asked him what was the matter. Instead of responding, Mr. Harmon touched his horse with the whip. The officers had the impression that Mr. Harmon had attempted to stop the boys from playing ball and had in some way been injured by them. The driver of the patrol wagon increased the speed of the conveyance for the purpose of enabling the officers to make arrests should the surmise prove correct.

On reaching the farm they ascertained that he had received no injury at the hands of any person, but that blood was seen to suddenly come from his mouth. The officers hurried back in the patrol and soon observed a little crowd of persons gathered together in West Third between Erie and Albany streets.

It appears that after Mr. Harmon was passed by the officers in the patrol wagon, he turned down Niagara to Third street. As he drove along the latter street, Mr. Luke Phillips, who lives at No. 255, between Erie and Niagara streets, was standing in his front yard with Mrs. Phillips. They observed Mr. Harmon driving along in his carriage, spitting blood and trying to brush it away from his mouth with his hand. The horse was trotting slowly and Mr. Phillips ran after it. He succeeded in catching the animal a short distance after passing Erie street. The lines were then hanging over the dashboard and Mr. Harmon was unconscious. When Mr. Phillips seized the reins the horse shied a little and Mr. Harmon fell forward across the dashboard and from there on to the wheel of the carriage. He was carried to the grass by the side of the walk and held in a sitting position, till the arrival of Drs. Eddy and Howard, who responded promptly to the call for their services. Life had fled, however, before their arrival. In fact he expired within five minutes after being carried to the sidewalk.

The remains were placed in the ambulance and taken to the undertaking rooms of V. D. Pierce in West Bridge street, where an examination was made by Dr. Eddy. Only a slight bruise was found on the right wrist, which, unquestionably, had been occasioned when Mr. Harmon fell in the carriage. Dr. Eddy pronounced the case of death hemorrhage of the lungs. Coroner Vowinkle was also in attendance and decided an inquest unnecessary.

Orville J. Harmon was born in the town of Redfield, Oswego County, N. Y., October 5, 1811, and was one of a numerous family remarkable for force of character and longevity of years, one of whom was the late David Harmon who died about a year since at the age of ninety-two years, who was for a long number of years one of Oswego's best known and most highly respected citizens. In early life he removed to Jefferson county where

he prepared for college in the Belleville academy, and graduated at Union college, Schenectady, in 1835. He read law with Brown & Thompson, Ballston Spa, Saratoga county, and was admitted to the bar in Albany in October 1836. Some years later he came to Oswego as the law partner of Hon. Enoch B. Talcott and the firm of Talcott & Harmon, as long as it continued, was one of the most prominent law firms in this section of the state. Lawyers now living speak of Mr. Harmon as one of the most successful criminal lawyers in the county.

In 1848 Oswego was organized as a city and the office of recorder was created. It happened at a time when the temperance sentiment was agitating the public mind and there were efforts being made to suppress the illegal sale of ardent spirits. The whigs had a majority in the city and it was understood that the late Daniel H. Marsh, an active temperance man, would be nominated and elected the first recorder of the city. The whigs held a meeting for the nomination of candidates for city offices in the old supreme court room (old market hall building) and the liquor men rallied and Mr. Marsh was defeated for the nomination, and a lawyer in the liquor interest was nominated. Mr. Harmon was a democrat and had not been a candidate for any office. A committee of temperance democrats, who would have voted for Mr. Marsh had he been nominated by the whigs, called upon Mr. Harmon to induce him to accept the democratic nomination, and expressed the opinion that there were enough temperance whigs dissatisfied with the whig nomination, to elect him if he would consent to accept the nomination. He objected decidedly. He said it would involve withdrawing from the law firm of Talcott & Harmon, and they were doing too well to permit him to think of such a thing,—that as a judicial officer it would involve his retiring from the practice of law, and he must decline. The field it would open to him for doing good was pointed out,—his position as a temperance man was appealed to,—and he yielded. The democrats nominated him and he was elected the first recorder of the city of Oswego. He at once withdrew from the law firm, and never after entered upon the practice of his profession.

As recorder of the city, Orville J. Harmon has never had a superior. He at once became a terror to evil doers. The city was at that time, without license and he made it emphatically a temperance city. His theory used to be,—if the authorities would refrain from granting licenses to sell liquor it was his duty to see that it was not sold, and he could execute the law, and he did so execute the law until Oswego was noted as the most orderly city in the country. He was elected recorder in 1848, and served until 1852. He was again elected in 1858 and served continuously until 1865.

When his old law friend, Hon. E. B. Talcott, was appointed collector of the port of Oswego, there had been serious irregularities and frauds in the previous administration of the office. Although Judge Harmon was objected to as not being an altogether orthodox democrat, Mr. Talcott made him his deputy and placed him in full control of the finances of the office. He told the "leaders" they could name the inspectors, the tide waiters etc., but in charge of the money matters he must and would have a man upon whose integrity he could rely, and democrat or no democrat, Orville J. Harmon was the man. It is unnecessary to state that there were no scandals connected with the Oswego collectorship from that time on—or while Orville J. Harmon controlled its affairs.

It is in connection with the Sunday school enterprise that Judge Harmon was the best known and has won his most enduring fame. As a force in the Sunday school work, and as one of its most effective workers, Judge Harmon was known from one end of this state to the other, and throughout Oswego county his name was as familiar as household words. It is proper to state that in this work no man in Oswego county will be so greatly missed as he will be, and scarcely less so throughout the state.

When the present County Court House was to be erected the site was occupied by a wooden structure which it was necessary to demolish or remove. Judge Harmon visited the board of supervisors and solicited the privilege of removing the structure at his own expense, which being granted he removed the building across the street to a lot east of the Church of the Evangelist where he rebuilt and refitted the same for a Sunday school edifice where for more than thirty years it performed duty as a convenient and commodious Sunday school edifice.

Although an Episcopalian so far as church membership was concerned, Judge Harmon has known no creed in his Sunday school work. It was enough for him to know that the cause of Christ could be promoted, in any church or in any neighborhood, in Oswego city or county, and he has been often called upon to visit other sections of the state in his capacity as Sunday school worker. He was sent as a delegate to the Rake centennial at London, after which he visited the provinces, always in the Sunday school work throughout the kingdom.

But not alone in the Sunday school enterprise was Judge Harmon's benevolence and christian character felt. He was earnest and untiring in every benevolent and christian work that could benefit his fellow man. He was president of the Oswego Orphan Asylum, for many years a member of the local committee of prison associations of the state, and took a deep interest in the condition of the jails of this county and the improvement of the inmates. He was a man who never neglected a duty—a friendly, genial citizen,—one of the highest types of humanity, an active, energetic, christian gentleman.

Judge Harmon was married in 1840, to Miss Mary L. Warner, of Canaan, Columbia county, N. Y., who survives him, an intelligent and highly respected lady. He leaves two daughters, Mrs. Robert G. Post and Miss Anna Harmon, both of this city.

The funeral services will be held at 4 p. m. Tuesday from his late residence, East Oneida street, between Second and Third streets.

January 6, 1953

Miss Anna W. Post
118 East Third St.
Oswego, New York

My dear Miss Post:

It was good to hear from you again and to receive the material you so kindly sent. This will be in the permanent archives of Union College and is greatly appreciated. We have, in our Alumni House, a show case and we will exhibit these items for a time at least.

Thank you very much for your thought of us.

Sincerely yours,

Henry J. Swanker, Director
of Alumni Relations

HJS/j

118 Black 3rd St
Cincinnati, Ky

Mr. Henry J. Sraubee:
My dear Mr. Sraubee:

I was happy to receive
your letter and to know I
could place my Grandfather's
diplomas etc with the College.
So I am sending probably via
Monday's mail, a box containing
1. J. Harrison's Union diploma 1830
2. admission to the bar certificate 1838
3. Commencement program 1834-35
4. His Phi Beta Kappa key
5. " Sigma Phi pie.

I liked very much the things
you listed and am enclosing
family items you requested
together with some notes which

You may not consider important.
He was a very spiritual man
and thought far ahead of
his generation. Expected great
things in science in the coming
years! He rode on that first
railroad... and I, his grand-
daughter have them. What
an age on horse!

Trusting my box will arrive
intact. I am

Very Sincerely

Ann. Jane Post

ORVILLE J. HARMON

BORN IN REDFIELD N.Y. 1811, SON OF DAVID HARMON AND DELIA OVERTON
ONE OF ELEVEN CHILDREN. THE FAMILY MOVED TO HENDERSON, N.Y.
ORVILLE GRADUATED FROM BELLEVILLE ACADEMY, AND FOR MANY YEARS WAS
PRESIDENT OF ITS ALUMNI. ADMITTED TO THE BAR IN 1838, HE BEGAN
PRACTICING LAW IN OSWEGO, N.Y. IN 1840, HE MARRIED MARY LAVINIA
WARNER, OF CANAAN, N.Y. THE SISTER OF HIS UNION COLLEGE FRIEND
EDWARD WARNER. OF THEIR TWO DAUGHTERS, MARY, AND ANNA, ONE MARRIED,
MARY BECAME THE WIFE OF ROBERT G. POST OF OSWEGO. OF HER THREE
CHILDREN, ROBERT, ANNA, AND HAROLD, THE DAUGHTER ONLY SURVIVED.

(MISS ANNA W. POST OSWEGO N.Y.)

IN 1880 JUDGE HARMON REPRESENTED OSWEGO COUNTY AT THE ROBERT
RAIKES SUNDAY SCHOOL CENTENNIAL IN LONDON ENGLAND, WHERE HE HAD
THE HONOR OF PRESIDING AT ONE OR MORE MEETINGS. HIS DIARY OF THIS
JOURNEY IS MOST INTERESTING.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR HE WAS SENT BY THE CITY TO VISIT THE HOSPITALS
AT THE FRONT AS HE HAD A WIDE ACQUAINTANCE THROUGH THE COUNTY.

HE WAS MUCH IN DEMAND AS A SPEAKER AT RELIGIOUS CONVENTIONS.
EVEN TODAY HE IS QUOTED BY LOCAL EDUCATORS.

INSCRIPTION ON SILVER SERVICE PRESENTED IN 1852

A Testimonial of respect to
O J Harmon Esq for his
official energy and integrity while Recorder
of the City of Oswego
from his constituents.

Arville J. Harmon, Jr. A.B. 1835

Orville J. Harmon 1835
A.B.